1937 Battle of Antietam, MD, Half Dollar

50,028 pieces coined at the Philadelphia Mint with 28 pieces reserved for annual assay and 32,000 melted. Designed by William Marks Simpson and distributed by The Washington County (Maryland) Historical Society, J. R. R. Black, chairman. Also called the Lee/McClellan half dollar back in the late 30s. Image courtesy of Mark Goodman. A coin I use to own.

Approved by Congress on June 24, 1937 and issued in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

Design:

Obverse: Conjoined busts of General George B. McClellan and General Robert E. Lee, in military uniforms to left; below busts in small letters GEN. GEORGE B. McCLELLAN. GEN. ROBERT E. LEE; in left field LIBERTY; around upper border, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA; around lower border, HALF DOLLAR; to left of HALF DOLLAR stars representing McClellan's rank as Major General of the Union; to right of HALF DOLLAR 3 stars representing Lee's rank as General in the Confederate Army; in lower left field near Lee's shoulder the artist's initials WMS in monogram.

Reverse: View of Burnside Bridge at Antietam; below bridge in small letters, THE BURNSIDE BRIDGE. SEPTEMBER 17 1862; above bridge, E. PLURIBUS UNUM; around border, SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY-BATTLE OF ANTIETAM; at lower border, 1937.

The models for this issue were prepared by William Marks Simpson, who also prepared those for the Norfolk and Roanoke issues. The sponsoring agency was The Washington County (Maryland) Historical Society.

This Act has the distinction of being the only Act approved in 1937 for which there is a coinage dated 1937, and for which the coinage was actually minted in that year.

The Battle of Antietam was one of the bloodiest single-day battles of the War between the States. Approximately 25,000 soldiers of both sides lost their lives in the conflict. The action of the battle centered about the possession of the Burnside Bridge, depicted on the reverse of the coin.

General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia opposed General George B. McClellan and his Army of the Potomac. It is ironic that McClellan, who studied under Lee at West Point, should be in later years having been opposed to him.

General Lee, whose portrait also appeared on the Stone Mountain issue, has the distinction of being the only person other than a President to have his portrait appear upon two commemorative coins of the United States.

Congressional Record

As reported in the Congressional Record for the session of the House June 7th, 1937 there was objection to favorable consideration of the bills providing for special half dollars to commemorate the Battle of Antietam and the three hundredth anniversary of the original Norfolk, VA, land grand. Both bills were carried over without prejudice.

SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

The Clerk called the next bill, S. 102, to authorize the coinage of 50-cent pieces in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

Mr. WELCH. Mr. Speaker, I object.

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman withhold his objection?

Mr. WELCH. Yes.

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. I wonder if the gentleman is fully acquainted with the background and the merits of this legislation? The gentleman may perhaps be governed by considerations which would apply to other bills on this subject but do not apply to this bill.

Mr. WELCH. My purpose in objecting was to get further information.

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. May I say to the gentleman this bill concerns the proposed commemoration of the Battle of Antietam, with which, of course, the gentleman must be familiar, one of the great and vital battles of the Civil War.

Mr. TABER. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield for a question?

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. If I can answer it, I will do so gladly.

Mr. TABER. Is it not a fact there has been a tremendous number of abuses with reference to the coinage of these 50-cent pieces all over the country? Committees have been appointed which have made large profits by promoting the sale of these coins, and this has become almost a public scandal wherever it has been done.

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. I think perhaps that was the consideration which moved the objector. However, that consideration does not apply to this bill, may I assure the House. In this particular instance no racket is or can be connected with the disposition of the coins. A special commission has been appointed to administer the matter, of which a Representative from the State of Vermont is a member, and of which I myself also happen to be a member. Not a single one of these coins will get into the hands of the profit mongers.

Mr. PLUMLEY. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. I yield.

Mr. MEAD. As a Member interested in one of the bills turned down, I hope this bill passes because the experience that will result from the passage of this bill will help the rest of us who have bills pending before the committee.

Mr. CITRON. Mr. Speaker, will the gentleman yield?

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. I yield.

Mr. CITRON. Why is the number of coins limited to 50,000 in Senate bill 102?

Mr. LEWIS of Maryland. It was thought that some limit ought to be placed upon the number of such coins and this is also the view of the Treasury.

Mr. CITRON. If 50,000 commemorative coins are not sufficient for the demand in this country, a situation arises such as has often occurred in the past. While I desire to commemorate the Battle of Antietam, nevertheless I must agree with many of my constituents who have written me, complaining about what we have done in the past by limiting the number of such coins and helping to create a form of racketeering in this country. A few people obtain a large quantity of these coins, thus creating a scarcity on the market and forcing prices upward. I do not believe we should pass legislation which can be utilized by some people in such a manner. I believe such legislation should be surrounded with safeguards to protect us against these evils.

[Here the gavel fell.]

Mr. MEAD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that we may return to the bill sponsored by the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. LEWIS].

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER. Is there objection to the present consideration of the bill S. 102?

Mr. MARTIN of Massachusetts. I object, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. PARSONS. Mr. Speaker, was the request for consideration of the bill or to return to the bill in order to ask that it may go over without prejudice?

The SPEAKER. Objection was made to the original request, and the gentleman from New York [Mr. MEAD] asked unanimous consent to return to the bill, and that request was granted. The Chair then submitted the question of whether or not the bill would be considered, and the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. MARTIN] objected, and only one objection is required under the rule.

Courtesy of the U. S. Commission of Fine Arts

Minutes of Meeting held in Washington, D. C., May 27, 1937

The following members were present:
Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Clarke,
Mr. Savage,
Mr. Shepley,
Mr. Lamb,
Mr. Manship,

Also H. P. Caemmerer, Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer.

Battle of Antietam Memorial Coin: Under date of May 25, 1937, the following letter was received from Senator Millard E. Tydings, requesting the advice of the Commission as to the Battle of Antietam Memorial Coin:

May 25, 1937.

Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman,
The Commission of Fine Arts,
Navy Department Building,
Washington, D. C.

My dear Mr. Moore,

I received your letter of the 16th relative to the Battle of Antietam Memorial Coin, for which I wish to thank you.

The measure authorizing the issuance of this coin has now been approved by the House Committee, and we hope to have it passed very soon. Will you please be so good as to advise me if the sculptor has conformed to the suggestions contained in your letter and whether the design is now in proper order? Because of the shortness of the time, the celebration to be held in September, we are most anxious to have everything in readiness to carry out the plans as soon as the bill becomes a law.

Thanking you for your further advices, and with best wishes, I am

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) M. E. Tydings.

The Commission had previously sent a letter to Senator Tydings on April 16, (**Exhibit G**) reporting their approval of the model subject to certain changes. Mr. William Marks Simpson, sculptor, was present to confer with the Commission about the model and he assured the Commission that as soon as Congress has enacted legislation, he will complete the models of the coin. (**Exhibit G-1**)

Exhibit G

April 16, 1937.

Dear Senator Tydings:

Your letter of April 14th and photograph of the models, for the Battle of Antietam Memorial Coin, were brought to the attention of Mr. Paul Manship, sculptor member of the Commission.

The Commission of Fine Arts, in consideration of the pressure of time, approves the design as submitted. However, the Commission would suggest to the designer that on the obverse the small lettering is not well placed and the reverse of the design is confusing with the principal motive not sufficiently sculptural. It is too photographic and encroaches on the lettering band.

These are simply suggestions to the designer which he may wish to use for own satisfaction, provided he can conveniently do so.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore
Chairman

Hon. Millard E. Tydings,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

Exhibit G-1

May 27, 1937.

Dear Senator Tydings:

Your letter of May 25th was received, and the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting today were in conference with Mr. William Marks Simpson with regard to the model for the Battle of Antietam Memorial Coin.

Mr. Simpson has assured the Commission that he will have the models completed when the legislation of Congress on the subject is approved.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman

Hon. Millard E. Tydings,
United States Senate,
Washington, D. C.

"To the Director of the Mint Nellie Taylor (*sic*) Ross from the Chairman of the Washington County Historical Society Park Loy on June 24, 1937, regarding the Battle of Antietam Memorial Half Dollar.

In accordance with the provision of a recent Act of the 75th Congress, and at the suggestion of senator Millard E. Tydings of Maryland, on behalf of the Washington County Historical society as Chairman of the Board of Directors, I am hereby requesting, the minting of the 50,000 half dollars of a special design in commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

It is understood that the proposed design developed for us by Mr. William Marks Simpson of Baltimore, Maryland, has been or will be submitted to the Commission of Fine Arts for its approval and that the said design will be delivered to you by Mr. Simpson on or before July 1, 1937.

For your information, I beg to advise that the Washington County Historical Society, through the Second National Bank of Hagerstown, Maryland, has made the necessary arrangements for the paying for the said coins and the $300.00 charge for the necessary die. I am enclosing a letter from an assistant cashier of the said bank with reference to the payment to the government for the said coins and die, and the manner of delivery to the said bank for us.

In view of the very limited time still remaining prior to the opening of the National Antietam Commemoration (September 4 to 17, 1937), we will appreciate very much, your cooperation in any manner possible, expediting the minting and delivery of these coins.

To the Director of the Mint Nellie Taylor [*sic*] Ross from the Chairman of the Washington County Historical Society Park Loy on June 29, 1937, regarding the Battle of Antietam Memorial Half Dollar.

With reference to the issuance of the Antietam Commemorative coin and my telephone conversation with you this morning relative to certain details of distribution, I wish to confirm certain of my suggestions as follows:

1. We have fixed twenty five as the maximum number of coins any individual may purchase. In doing this we find upon a checkup that there are a number of individuals who will legitimately desire coins up to this number for gifts to their friends. At the same time with this restriction we do not believe we will be troubled with speculators.
2. We have adopted a policy, first come first served, in the matter of accepting applications. This theory is based upon our desire to properly publicize the issue over a wide area within a given time preventing any priority of notice and putting proceeds from the sale being applicable to the Antietam commemoration expenses, and which event is to us too rapidly approaching due to legislative delays encountered.
3. In the matter of fifteen cents of the dollar sixty five cents, I advise that this represents the loading charge to take care of the sculptors fee, the dies, printed matter for publication purposes, printed matter and containers for use in the shipment of coins, clerical force for handling correspondence and shipment of coins, wages of a bonded supervisor in charge of handling the coins and postage and insurance charges.

We believe that, this is a reasonable loading charge and in advance orders already received no complaints have been made with reference thereto whether one or more coins are asked for.

I will appreciate your approval of items herein referred to as they seem to be items pertinent to the matter of approval of the Director of the Mint, and to expedite our proceedings with the sale of coins, I will appreciate your prompt reply.

Conversation with Mr. Simpson the sculptor who designed the coin; and he advised this morning that an eight inch plaster model will reach you from the Medallic Arts Co. of New York on either Thursday or Friday of this week. It is the latter company which is making the reduction for him in accordance with the usual procedure."[1]

"United States Commemorative Coins were issued to commemorate a specific event, person, or locale. This type of coinage must allude to the event, person, or locale; because there is a limited space symbolism plays a major role in design.

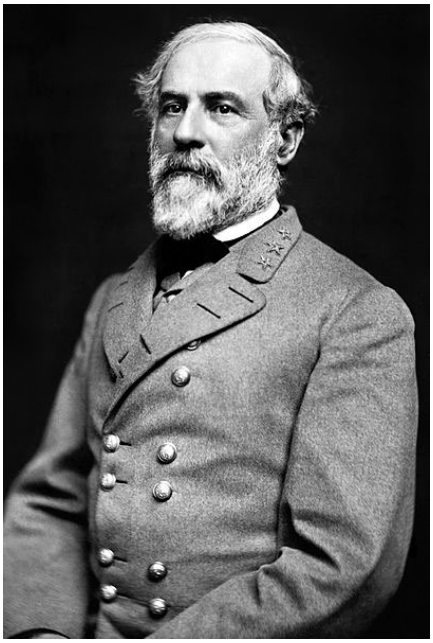
The Importance of Stars

Stars are definitely the most common type of symbolism on commemorative coinage. The most popular The most popular use of stars is the reference to the thirteen colonies or the thirteen seceding southern states as on the Arkansas Centennial Half Dollar, the Stone Mountain Half Dollar, the Columbia, South Carolina, Sesquicentennial Half Dollar, and the Connecticut Tercentenary Half Dollar. On the Alabama Centennial Half Dollar the 22 stars on the obverse refer to Alabama being the 22nd state to enter the Union. On the reverse of the Cleveland Centennial/Great Lakes Exposition Half Dollar nine stars mark the nine principal cities of the Great Lakes. (Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Duluth, Milwaukee, Rochester, Toledo, and Toronto)

Rank is also symbolized by stars as on the Battle of Antietam Half Dollar where on the obverse three stars behind Lee represent his rank as General in the Confederate Army and two stars on the left represent McClellan's rank as Major General."[2]

[1] ***The Authoritative Reference on Commemorative Coins 1892 –1954*, Kevin Flynn, published by Kyle Vick, 2008. p. 47 and 255-256.**

[2] ***The Commemorative Trail*, Symbolism on U.S. Commemorative Coinage, by Debbie Wilamowski, J-13, MI. Fall, 1986 – Volume 3 – No. 1.**



General Robert E. Lee, ca. 1861-1863. Courtesy of *Wikimedia Commons*.

"The following letter has been received from the Commemorative Coin Committee of the Washington County (Maryland) Historical Society regarding the Antietam half dollar:

'The Washington County Historical Society, as the sponsoring agency for the 1937 celebration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, announces to coin collectors that the proposed coinage and issuance of a special commemorative coin in honor of the celebration has been deferred until February or March of 1937. Assurance is given that this commemorative coin when issued will be unique in design, this uniqueness in itself forecasting an unprecedented demand on the part of collectors who appreciate the artistic. The details of the design are being closely guarded, but will be most appropriately linked with the event which the issue commemorates.'

Complete details as to this issue will be announced in the January or February issues of coin collectors' and hobbyists' publications, and no advance checks or money orders will be received prior to such announcement. All checks or money orders already received will be returned to the sender, whose interest is most deeply appreciated. In the proposed announcement of the issue it will be understood that no priority of reservations will be established except that members of the Washington County Historical Society will be given a position of priority in reservations, this applying to present and prospective members, to each of whom not more than ten coins will be allotted."[3]

"The officials of the Washington County (Maryland) Historical Society, which is sponsoring the Antietam half dollar, are hopeful – even confident – that their bill will pass the House of Representatives. The bill authorizing this coin passed both houses near the close of last year's session, but time did not permit the House to act on an amendment made to the bill in the Senate. It was reintroduced at the present session and passed the Senate several days ago.

So confident is the society that the bill will become law that designs have been prepared for the coin. The obverse has conjoined busts of Gen. George B. McClellan and Gen. Robert E. Lee commanding the two armies engaged in the Battle of Antietam. The reverse shows the Burnside Bridge, which occupied a prominent part in the battle.

The battle was fought September 17th, 1862, and has been described by historians of the civil war as not only a strategic struggle but the bloodiest one-day battle of the war, McClellan and Lee as the leaders of the opposing armies. It marked the first attempt of Lee to cross the Potomac to invade the North and beleaguer Washington.

The commemorative half dollars for the seventy-fifth anniversary celebration next September are designed as memorials and incidentally to help pay the cost of the celebration, which will tie in with the 175th anniversary of the settlement of Hagerstown, Maryland, and the 200th anniversary of the founding of Washington County. Therefore, the triple celebration has much general significance and will mark a high spot in local annals.

It is proposed to climax the triple celebration with the re-enactment of several of the outstanding features of the battle, including 'Bloody Lane' and 'Burnside Bridge,' in which national as well as State troops of Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia will participate on the battlefield. This event will take place on Friday, September 17th, 1937, the anniversary of the battle. President Roosevelt is expected to attend and make an address, also the Governors of many States.

A national commission has been appointed by President Roosevelt for the Antietam celebration, supplemented by a State commission appointed by Governor Nice, and a local commission. The project has the united support of all local agencies."[4]

[3] ***The Numismatist*, The Antietam Half Dollar, September, 1936, p. 713-714.**

[4] ***The Numismatist*, The Antietam Commemorative Half Dollar, May, 1937.**

"The House today passed a Senate bill authorizing the coinage of 50,000 special 50-cent pieces to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam in Maryland.

Two minor amendments were adopted, however, sending the proposal back to the Senate for concurrence in the House changes. The first restricted coinage to a specific mint while the second would make disposal of the coins subject to approval by the director of the mint.

The bill, introduced by Senator Millard Tydings of Maryland, was sought by the Washington County Historical Society of Maryland, which is arranging a celebration of the Antietam anniversary next September 17.

A similar measure was introduced by Representative David J. Lewis, Democrat, Cumberland, Md., but after Senate passage of the Tydings bill Lewis had the Senate proposal substituted for his bill on the House calendar.

The coins will be legal tender, dated 1937, and issued only on the request of the Washington County Historical Society of Hagerstown, Md., upon payment by it of the par value of the coins.

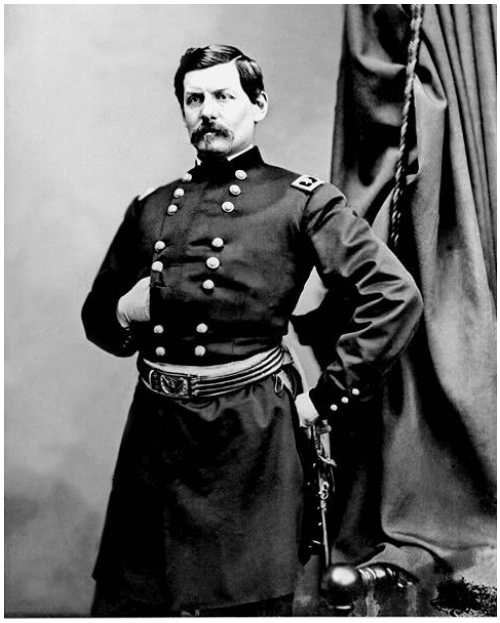
The Society will be allowed to dispose of the coins at par or at a premium, subject to the approval of the director of the mint, and the net proceeds shall be used by the organization to defray the expenses incidental to the celebration."[5]

"President Roosevelt put the final stamp of approval on the Antietam commemorative coin bill yesterday when he signed his name–Franklin Delano Roosevelt–and the bill is now law.

The President's prompt co-operation in this matter, following the Senate's concurrence with the House amendments several days ago, starts the wheels moving for the minting of 50,000 half-dollars designed to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

The plaster model of the coin, designed by William Marks Simpson, eminent sculptor, of Baltimore, has already been tentatively approved after the recommendation of several changes by the sculptor, (since made). Upon receiving the final approval of this Commission, for the director of the United States Mint, and the Secretary of the Treasury's sanction of coin requirements relating to weights, measures, etc., the coins will be minted.

According to expectations of the local sponsoring agency of the National Antietam Commemoration, the coins should be ready for distribution by August."[6]



General George B. McClellan in 1861. Courtesy of *Wikimedia Commons*.

"Residents of Washington County will have 5,000 of the special Antietam Commemorative half dollars placed in reserve for them up to July 15th; it was announced today by J.R.R. Black, chairman of the coin committee of the National Antietam Commemorative organization.

This will give local people an opportunity to make their reservations in this two-week period, before the hundreds of applications which are poring in from outside are filled. 'For' said Mr. Black, 'we want local people to be able to have some of these coins, and although 50,000 of them have been authorized by Congress to be minted, at the rate the reservations are coming in, it will not be long before they are all taken.'

[5] *The Morning Herald*, Hagerstown, Md. Coin Bill Is Passed By House; Antietam Commemorative Coin Authorized by Congress; Amendments are Added to Measure; 50,000 Special 50-cent Pieces Will Be Minted, Tuesday, June 22, 1937. (Washington, June 21, (AP)).

[6] *The Daily Mail*, Hagerstown, Md. Coin Measure Becomes Law with Signing, Antietam Bill Signed by President; Minting Will Start Soon. Hagerstown, Md. Friday, June 25, 1937.

Orders for the coins, which will sell at a dollar and sixty-five cents, are to be made by check or money order by cash payment at headquarters, 45 East Washington Street. Payment must be made before coins are reserved."[7]

1937 Battle of Antietam Half Dollar (the first coin reserved for the President). Courtesy Franklin D. Roosevelt. Presidential Library, 4079 Albany Post Road, Hyde Park, NY 12538. Part of a collection of coins, tokens, paper money, etc., received from President Roosevelt on May 29, 1941. Library number MO 1941.40.4.12.

Burnside's Bridge near Sharpsburg, Maryland, in 1862, seen from the Confederate viewpoint on the west side of Antietam Creek, looking east. Courtesy of *Wikipedia*.

[7] *The Daily Mail*, Hagerstown, Md. 5,000 Coins set aside; reserve that many Antietam Half Dollars for locals, Saturday, June 26, 1937.

UNITED STATES

ANTIETAM CELEBRATION COMMISSION

FOR THE COMMEMORATION
OF THE 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

UNITED STATES SENATE
MILLARD E. TYDINGS — MARYLAND
CHAIRMAN
GEORGE L. RADCLIFFE — MARYLAND

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
DAVID J. LEWIS — MARYLAND
VICE-CHAIRMAN
CHARLES A. PLUMLEY — VERMONT

PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTEES
HARRY F. BYRD — VIRGINIA
GEN. MILTON A. RECKORD — MARYLAND
PARK W. T. LOY — MARYLAND
SECRETARY AND TREASURER

HEADQUARTERS—45 E. WASHINGTON ST.
HAGERSTOWN, MARYLAND

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WASHINGTON COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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ANDREW K. COFFMAN
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SAMUEL E. PHILLIPS
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AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Historic Background of the "Lee - McClellan" - Antietam Commemorative Half-Dollar

This coin was authorized by a Special Act of the 75th Congress of the United States fittingly to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, fought near Sharpsburg, Maryland, south of Hagerstown, on September 17, 1862 and universally recognized as the bloodiest one day battle of the War between the States.

There between daylight and darkness on that date approximately 25,000 Union and Confederate soldiers fell. On the Confederate side was world-famed General Robert E. Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia; opposing him was General George B. McClellan and his Army of the Potomac. In the last analysis the titanic struggle was one between a great master and his brilliant pupil for General McClellan had studied the science of war at West Point under General Lee.

From the following States came the soldiers that gave Antietam its fadeless glory: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

PRESENTING

THE NATIONAL ANTIETAM COMMEMORATION AND TWO CENTURIES OF HISTORICAL EPISODES
SEPTEMBER, 1937—WASHINGTON COUNTY, MARYLAND

Antietam Commemorative Advertising Letter Front

DESIGN OF THE COIN

After seventy-five years the "Lee-McClellan" Antietam Commemorative Half-Dollar re-unites these two great Commanders. Designed by William Marks Simpson, noted sculptor of Baltimore, Maryland, the obverse side bears the profiles of General Lee and General McClellan—the reverse, the Burnside Bridge for the possession of which hours of bloody struggle ensued.

Because of the appropriateness of this issue, the world-wide fame of General Lee and the honored place General McClellan will always hold in our National History it is the objective of the sponsoring agency that these coins shall pass directly into the hands of interested citizens and private collectors thereby avoiding the possibility of speculation.

This letter is therefore being addressed to all banks in the United States and with which we will be glad to co-operate in the obtainment of this objective and assisting them in securing directly from these Headquarters such coins as their clients may desire.

It is anticipated that the coins will be minted and ready for distribution on or before August 1, 1937, and will be priced at $1.65 each, postage, insurance and distribution costs included. Upon remittance of the covering payment and a list of names of the clients for whom the coins are desired, we will be glad to make prompt shipment to you. Please make all checks and money orders payable to Washington County Historical Society.

Appreciating very much your co-operation in this matter, I beg to remain

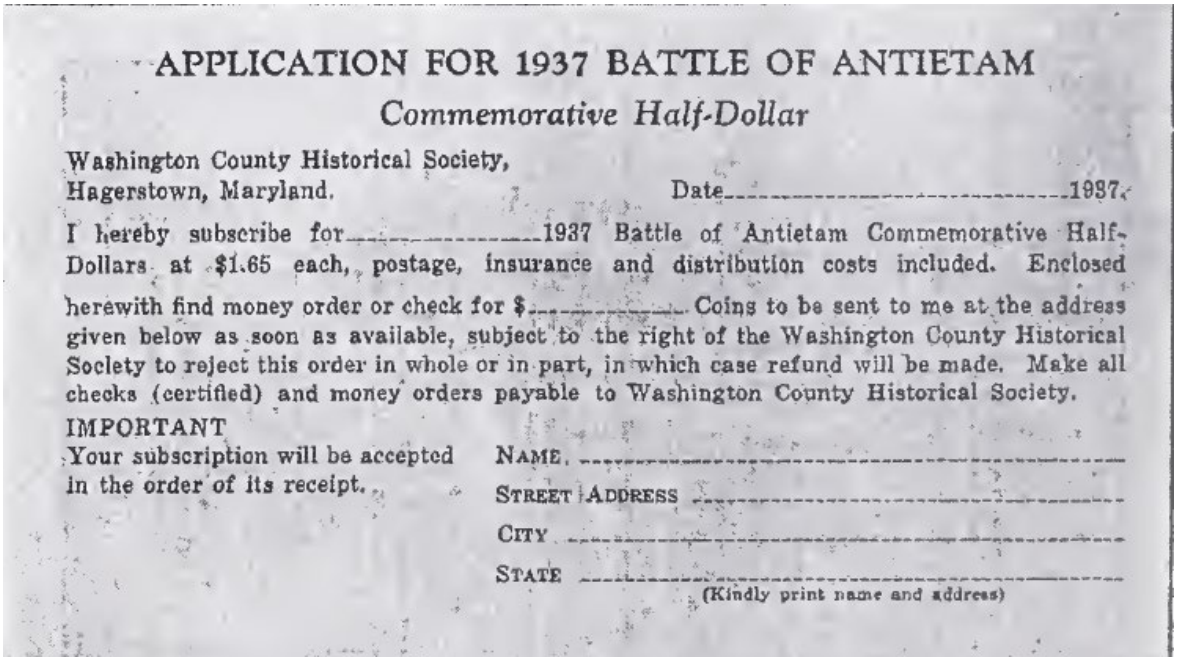
Yours sincerely,

Park W. T. Loy

PARK W. T. LOY, Chairman,
Board of Directors, Washington
County Historical Society, and
Secretary
United States Antietam Celebration
Commission.

Antietam Commemorative Advertising Letter Back

President Abraham Lincoln and General George McClellan near Antietam on October 3, 1862. Lincoln traveled to Frederick the next day to visit a wounded US Army officer. (Library of Congress)



APPLICATION FOR 1937 BATTLE OF ANTIETAM

Commemorative Half-Dollar

Washington County Historical Society,
Hagerstown, Maryland.

Date_____1937.

I hereby subscribe for_____1937 Battle of Antietam Commemorative Half-Dollars at $1.65 each, postage, insurance and distribution costs included. Enclosed herewith find money order or check for $_____ Coins to be sent to me at the address given below as soon as available, subject to the right of the Washington County Historical Society to reject this order in whole or in part, in which case refund will be made. Make all checks (certified) and money orders payable to Washington County Historical Society.

IMPORTANT
Your subscription will be accepted in the order of its receipt.

NAME. _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

(Kindly print name and address)

Antietam Application Form. Courtesy of *The Commemorative Trail*, 2010 Vol. 27.

"An application form for the 1937 Battle of Antietam Commemorative half dollars is being printed here for the convenience of local persons.

If persons wish to obtain some of the coins, which will be minted especially for the 75th Anniversary of Antietam Battle commemoration in Hagerstown and Washington County this Fall; they should clip this blank, fill it in and after enclosing payment, mail it to 'The Washington County Historical Society' at National Antietam Commemoration headquarters, 45 East Washington Street.

Just one week, up until next Thursday, remains for local people to reserve their coins. After that time, they will run a chance of not obtaining them, if the out of town reservations continue to come in at the present rate. Five thousand coins were set aside for local consumption between July 1 and July 15.

The coin is unique in that it is the first coin to bear the face of General Robert E. Lee (*sic,* Stone Mountain), idol of the south. The profile of the Union commander at Antietam, General McClellan, appears on the same side of the coin, and on the reverse side is Burnside Bridge, an important spot on the Antietam Battlefield.

Numerous requests from coin collectors all over the country are pouring in from far and wide, appreciating the value which these coins will have in years to come. However, requests for over twenty-five coins from one source are not being filled, so as to avoid racketeering prevalent in some sections of the country. Besides the coin's value from a collector's standpoint, it will serve as a beautiful souvenir of the commemoration event."[8]

"One of the proudest things a Hagerstown citizen can do toward the approaching National Antietam Commemoration in connection with the celebration of the Battle of Antietam, is to become the owner of one of the special Antietam half-dollars recently authorized by Congress and delivered by the U. S. Mint to Hagerstown banks, Park W. T. Loy, secretary of the U. S. Antietam Celebration Commission, said yesterday.

To be sure when the last cannon's roar has died away at the close of the re-enacted Battle of Antietam, September 17, and the President of the United States has said goodbye, everyone of us will want to be able to say to grandson or granddaughter in later years, of this first–and probably the last–restaging of this most sanguinary of all conflicts, that:

'I was there.'

Just as surely, you'll want to own one of the valued coins–the first to commemorate the great commanders of the North and South, General George B. McClellan and General Robert E. Lee, as a keep-sake down through the years. Such a treasure is bound to increase in value and sentimental worth with age.

The 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Antietam, and mammoth pageant, 'On wings of time,' is designed to boost Hagerstown–to give it a bigger place on the map of the nation. Proudly it belongs to the citizens of Hagerstown. For this reason the National Antietam celebration needs your help along the line, and the first thing to do is to buy your commemorative coin early.

Go to your bank today, or to 45 East Washington Street. It is a duty you'll always be proud of."[9]

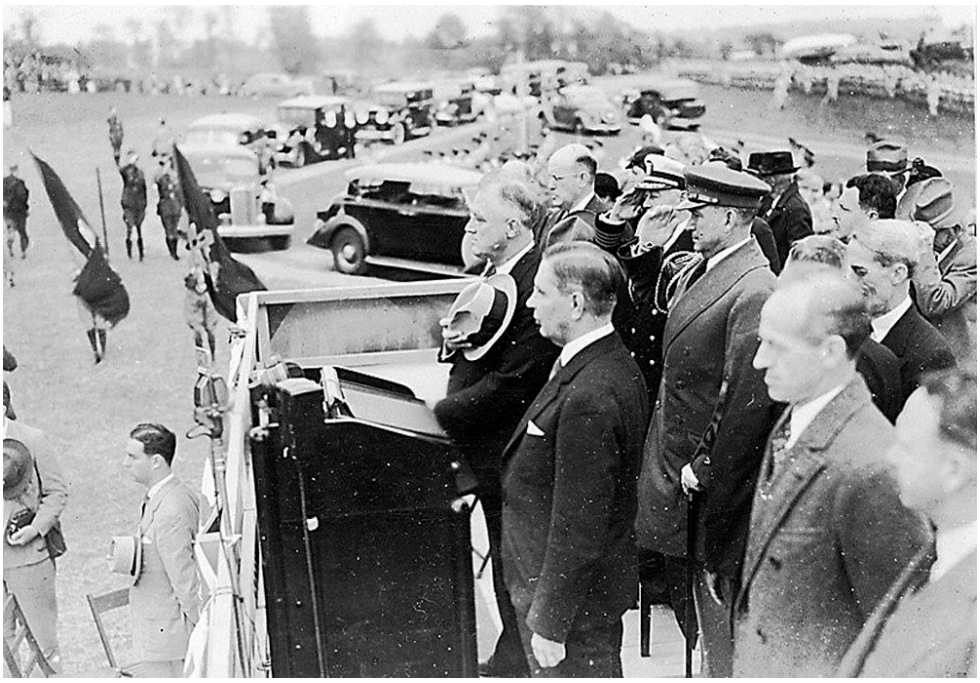
[8] ***The Morning Herald*, Hagerstown, Md. Reservations being received for Commemoration Coins, Thursday, July 8, 1937.**

[9] ***The Morning Herald*, Hagerstown, Md. Antietam Coin Is Rich in Sentiment; Citizens should be Proud to Own Commemorative Money. Wednesday, August 18, 1937.**

This is a picture taken June 6, 1936 in the cemetery at Winchester on Decoration Day. I [George Dellinger] am in uniform X. The other one is Daniel Miller, a Confederate vet, now in his 100th year. I am in my 92nd year (*from the back of the photo*). George Dellinger, formerly of Company D, 23rd Virginia Cavalry, sent this photograph to the Hagerstown (Md.) Historical Society in response to a US Antietam Celebration Commission questionnaire. The Commission organized the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of that momentous battle at Sharpsburg, Maryland on 17 September 1937, and had canvassed surviving Civil War veterans for their memories and present circumstances. Courtesy of The Western Maryland Historical Library.

Courtesy of TG.

A poster in my numismatic collection.



President Roosevelt speaks at the 75th anniversary at the Battle of Antietam in 1937 in Sharpsburg. Courtesy of *The Cumberland Times-News.*

Cornelius Vermeule writes: "The Jugate busts (conjoined, overlapping) of Generals George B. McClellan and Robert E. Lee are well defined, and Burnside Bridge over Antietam Creek is one of the most relaxed, natural landscapes to grace any commemorative coin (fig. 225). The multitude of inscriptions on the Battle of Antietam issue of 1937 avoid most of the faults exhibited in the two other half dollars, just described, by the same artist. Still, there are too many words, perhaps forced by a desire to spell out all names, titles, and facts, plus inclusion of all the statutory legends. This results in an unnecessary sense of spidery activity across the surfaces of both sides.

There is nothing original in these designs, but a quality of painterly impressionism in handling portraits and landscape makes the coin a satisfying experience, pleasure to contemplate."[10]

[10] ***Numismatic Art in America; Aesthetics of the United States Coinage*, 2nd edition, Cornelius Vermeule, Whitman Publishing, LLC, 2007, p. 188-189.**

William Marks Simpson, ca. 1944.

William Marks Simpson Bio: "Born on August 24, 1903, in Norfolk, Virginia, William Marks Simpson studied art and sculpture under J. Maxwell Miller, Hans Schuler, Herbert Adams, and others at the Maryland Institute, and at the American Academy in Rome. The husband of sculptress Marjorie Emory Simpson, he maintained a studio with her in Baltimore in the 1930's and taught at the Maryland institute. In 1936 his address was 8 West Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore. Among his works are a portrait-relief of Gen. E.W. Nichols (Virginia Military Institute) and a crucifixion group (altarpiece, Villa Aurelia, Rome).

Commemorative credits: 1936 Norfolk Bicentennial half dollar (with Marjorie Emory Simpson), 1937 Roanoke half dollar, 1937 Antietam half dollar."[11]

Congressional Authorization Act:

[PUBLIC—NO. 160—75th CONGRESS]
[CHAPTER 377—1st SESSION], [S. 102]

AN ACT

To authorize the coinage of 50-cent pieces in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That in commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Battle of Antietam there shall be coined at one mint only of the United States to be designated by the Director of the Mint not to exceed thirty thousand silver 50-cent pieces of standard, size, weight, and composition and of special appropriate single design to be fixed by the Director of the Mint, with the approval of the Secretary of the Treasury, but the United States shall not be subject to the expense of making the necessary dies and other preparations for this coinage.

SEC. 2. The coins herein authorized shall bear the date 1937, irrespective of the year in which they are minted or issued, shall be legal tender in any payment to the amount of their face value, and shall be issued only upon the request of the Washington County Historical Society of Hagerstown, Maryland, upon payment by it of the par value of such coins, but not less than twenty-five thousand such coins shall be issued to it at any one time and no such coins shall be issued after the expiration of one year after the date of enactment of this Act. Such coins may be disposed of at par or at a premium by such Washington County Historical Society of Hagerstown, Maryland, subject to the approval of the Director of the Mint, and the net proceeds shall be used by it in defraying the expenses incidental and appropriate to the commemoration of such event.

SEC. 3. All laws now in force relating to the subsidiary silver coins of the United States and the coining or striking of the same, regulating and guarding the process of coinage, providing for the purchase of material, and for the transportation, distribution, and redemption of coins, for the prevention of debasement or counterfeiting, for the security of the coins, or for any other purposes, whether said laws are penal or otherwise, shall, so far as applicable, apply to the coinage herein authorized.

Approved, June 24, 1937.

[11] ***Commemorative Coins of the United States; A Complete Encyclopedia*, Q. David Bowers. Published by Bowers and Merena, 1991.**